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**TO:** Chief School Administrator/Charter School Lead Person

**FROM:** Edward Dickson, Director  
Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness

Christopher Cerf, Acting Commissioner  
Department of Education

**SUBJECT: NJ Safer Schools for a Better Tomorrow (SSBT) State Initiative**

In the past year our schools have experienced a myriad of events, such as Hurricane Irene, as well as an increase in school violence and other challenges. Our goal as a state is to minimize disruptions to learning associated with these types of events and ensuring that our students are back in the classroom as quickly as possible following an emergency.

To this end, the Governor's School Security Task Force is launching a **Safer Schools for A Better Tomorrow (SSBT) Initiative**. The **SSBT Initiative** combines elements, resources, and guidance from the newly released **LEA Minimum Requirements for School Safety and Security (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1)**. Specifically, the initiative consists of direct technical assistance to schools, county-specific coordination with law enforcement, increased communication among and between chief school administrators, improved infrastructures to facilitate surveillance, as well as symposiums and trainings to advance a skilled work force. Attached please find a detailed outline of the **SSBT Initiative**.

Today, as we observe the tragic anniversary of the shootings at Columbine High School – an event that changed how we look at school safety and security - we are seeking your support for the **SSBT Initiative** to advance our preparation and response to school-affected emergencies. If you have any questions regarding this initiative, please contact the Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning at (609) 631-4531 or (609) 633-6681 or via email at [schoolsecurity@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:schoolsecurity@doe.state.nj.us).

ED/CDC/ab/jl:njsaferschoolforabettertommorrow  
Attachment

c: Members, State Board of Education  
Senior Staff  
Diane Shoener  
Justin Barra  
Anthony Bland  
Executive County Superintendents  
Dennis Quinn, OHSP, Chief of Staff

Jeffrey S. Chiesa, Attorney General  
Michelle Miller, Deputy Attorney General  
Michael Walters, Deputy Attorney General  
Members, School Security Task Force  
NJ LEE Group  
Garden State Coalition of Schools

# Safer Schools for a Better Tomorrow

A collaborative initiative between New Jersey's Department of Education and Office of Homeland Security & Preparedness.

Initiative	Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statewide School Security Drill Audit</li> </ul>	The Governor's Office is interested in determining how policies affect schools. The state is tasked with observing 20-30% of school security drills in each county's school districts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making Our Schools Safe (MOSS) Districts</li> </ul>	The SSTF will provide direct technical assistance (TA) to over 25% of NJ's districts and help to identify needs and areas of improvement as well as <i>what works</i> to build best practice in NJ.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Securing Our Schools (Law Enforcement Officers' Training)</li> </ul>	Working with local law enforcement and understanding the same language is of utmost importance. The Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning (OSPEP) will deliver a "State of the State" to local law enforcement by county. This update will include current statutes, school security drill update, LEA min requirement and next steps.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Security Mini-Conference</li> </ul>	To enhance state-wide communication and coordination between local law enforcement and educational officials, the Governor's School Security Task Force in conjunction with each county prosecutor's office and county office of education will host a half-day school security mini-conference. Each mini-conference will feature a department update, SSTF update, new school security drill statute guidance, an overview of the Critical Incident Response CD-Rom and local level information about the coordination and communication of how to enhance school safety and security.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surf's Up (Internet Safety)</li> </ul>	Each OSPEP Regional Planner will work with local county offices of education to offer training and TA to districts, key stakeholders, and communities on the use, dangers, and impact of the internet as well as offer tips on successfully navigating through the World Wide Web. Topics include: on cyber-security, cyber-crimes, internet safety, online predators, sexting, cyber-bullying and social networking websites.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nonpublic Safe Schools Symposiums</li> </ul>	NJ school communities represent a seamless interaction between K-12 students. The state will create and deliver two state-wide Nonpublic School Security "State of the State". The State of the State will include topics such as NJ Statutes, school security drill law, LEA Min Requirement and next steps. It is important <i>all</i> NJ kids and communities receive the same information to best prepare for our communities' safety.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Jersey's Safety Cloud (i.e. iCloud)</li> </ul>	In an effort to improve communication and surveillance, the state seeks to enhance the systems infrastructure to better deliver time-sensitive information, increase two-way communication capacity, and track trends to develop programs and policies consistent with <i>what's happening</i> .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model School Safety and Security Plan/ Template</li> </ul>	The state will create and disseminate a <b>model template</b> for a school district's safety and security plan as required by NJAC 6A: 16-5.